

Tea Infuser Types

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Tea infusers, in summary: A UK guide to tea infusers: basket infusers best, mesh balls worst, no-infuser works too. Leaf expansion matters; size > price for quality brewing.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Tea Infuser Types. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-infuser-types/>*

Infuser choice matters more than people think, and the answer is simple. This sits in the kit cluster beside [travel tea infuser](#).

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in May 2026.

The core principle

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The core principle , Tea Infuser Types. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-infuser-types/>*

Leaves need room to expand and circulate; the more room, the better the extraction, see [loose leaf tea](#).

Basket infusers (best)

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Basket infusers (best) , Tea Infuser Types. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-infuser-types/>*

A large, fine basket that sits in the cup or pot gives leaves space; the default recommendation.

Mesh balls and clips (worst)

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Mesh balls and clips (worst) , Tea Infuser Types. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-infuser-types/>*

Small tea balls and squeeze tongs cramp the leaf, under extracting and wasting good tea.

Built in pot infusers

Pots with a generous removable basket combine room to expand with easy removal; very practical.

Paper filter bags

Empty fillable paper bags are a fine cheap compromise, more room than a ball, less than a basket.

The no infuser option

Grandpa style (leaves loose in the cup) actually beats a cramped ball for many teas, see [grandpa style](#).

Quick take

Use a large basket infuser or loose leaf with room; avoid tiny balls and squeezers, they waste good tea, see [travel tea infuser](#).

The essentials: tea infuser types

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Type	Answer
Core principle	Leaves need room to expand; small infusers restrict; impacts brewing quality
Basket infusers	BEST option; large mesh basket fits cup top; leaves expand freely; easy
Mesh ball/clip	WORST option; too small for proper expansion; leaves cramped; poor extraction
Built-in pot infusers	Generally good; integrated with teapot; large enough usually
Paper filter bags	Acceptable; loose mesh allows expansion; disposable convenience
No infuser ("free leaf")	Excellent option; leaves loose in pot; strain when pouring
Specialty Yixing/gaiwan	For dedicated tea drinkers; substantial leaf room
Price range	£3-15 typical; quality matters less than size; replace cheap quickly
Quality features	Large size, fine mesh (no leaf bits through), stainless steel, easy clean
Avoid	Tiny mesh balls; plastic cheaply made; bamboo (mould-prone)
For tea bags	Not relevant; tea bags ARE the infuser
Framing	Basket infuser or no-infuser approach best; tiny mesh balls genuinely worse

Reference noted

- [PubMed: Tannins and non-haem iron absorption](#)

FROM THE CURATOR *teas* · Spend less on prestige, more on freshness. A two-month-old supermarket bag still beats a three-year-old gift tin.

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More from the tea wiki

For related equipment context see the [variable-temperature kettle](#), the [teapot materials](#), the [cast iron teapot](#), the [glass teapot](#), and the [travel tea infuser](#). For water context see the [water for tea](#) and the [do you need a](#)

[water filter](#). For brewing context see the [how to brew tea](#), the [loose leaf vs bags](#), and the [gongfu brewing](#). For Chinese tea see the [gaiwan brewing](#) and the [Yixing teapot seasoning](#).

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